

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall at 2155 Main Street, with the option for Zoom video conferencing. The video was broadcast in real time and via a live video stream.

1. Roll Call.

Council Members

Mr. Thomas P. Gullotta, Chairman

Mr. Lawrence Niland, Vice Chairman

Ms. Deborah A. Carroll

Mr. Kurt P. Cavanaugh

Mr. John Cavanna

Ms. Mary LaChance

Mr. Jacob McChesney {participated via Zoom video conferencing}

Mr. Whit Osgood

Ms. Jennifer Wang

a. Pledge of Allegiance. *Led by Kerry C. Warren*

BUDGET REVIEWS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

- Presentation and discussion concerning Town Operations, Debt & Transfer, Revenues & Transfers, Capital Reserve Fund, Capital Improvement Program, and other budget related matters involving the combined 2023-2024 budget proposal.

Mr. Johnson explained that he adjusted the originally proposed 4.67% Town Operations budget increase down to 2.8%. One of the major factors for the increase has been the pandemic, which prompted the hiring of new IT staff. There have also been upward cost pressures for fuel, electricity, and contractual services. Cyber security continues to be at the forefront, with an ongoing 24-hour cyber security system. The employment market is a challenge, both with hiring new members and in remaining competitive. Post-pandemic, the request for clinical services at schools is at an all-time high. The BOF has recommended a \$200,000 non-specific reduction to the town budget, which adjusts the budget increase down to 2.37%. This is a remarkable decrease from the CPI increase of 6.04%.

He reviewed the 8 primary budget factors, which total the 2.8% increase. The first is wages. In the current year, they were not able to sustain what they had over the past three years. The budget includes funding for two new clinical counseling staff, police officers, inspections in field work, an electrician for wastewater/facilities, human resources, senior services, and IT/zoom positions. In 2014, the Town's full-time headcount was 240. This year, that number was unchanged. In the coming year, there is a net increase of four people. Ten years prior to 2014, the head count was 261, so they have done a good job of keeping the headcount flat. Mr. Johnson explained that the self-insurance fund struggled for several years, but they have been able to turn that around. In the past couple years, the premium has held flat. They seek ways to balance the reserve without creating a cliff down the road.

Mr. Johnson then reviewed the pension fund. A couple years ago, the ADC increased by \$1.7 million in one year. The net increase for the coming year is just \$75,000. He then reviewed Data Processing & Technology, which includes a 24/7 monitoring system. Contractual services are an upward cost pressure, which include services like trash and recycling at parks and school grounds. There are estimated increases in utilities and fuel costs. Electric rates have almost doubled. Even though usage is well below the 2008 figure, the exponential unit cost increase is having an effect. Capital outlay has remained relatively flat, as the Town tries to keep vehicles longer than industry standards. All other accounts in the budget total \$142,000, accounting for just 0.3% of the increase, which is very favorable.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked Lisa Zerio, Director of Parks and Recreation, how the park ranger program is going. Ms. Zerio stated that there were 7 rangers this past season, but one will not be returning. They have posted two positions. The program is going great, and there have been no issues. The number of rangers depends on the number of hours they can work. Mr. Cavanaugh asked about the two vehicles that are listed for replacement. Ms. Zerio acknowledged that the mileage on them is low, but the vehicles have been through rough conditions. Mr. Cavanaugh asked if there is anything being done to recoup the ranger positions to become police officers. Ms. Zerio has not done any training but can speak with Chief Porter about it.

Ms. Wang asked to summarize what the maintenance of natural turf fields looks like currently. Ms. Zerio explained that pesticides are used very conservatively. She also explained the maintenance of the synthetic turf fields at the high school. Ms. Wang asked about maintenance costs. Ms. Zerio stated that natural turf fields cost about \$12,500 per year and synthetic turf fields cost about \$3,500-\$4,000 to maintain. Ms. Wang asked about the splash pad hours. Ms. Zerio stated that a temporary fence will be erected in the spring so that the splash pad could be opened before the regular pool opens for the season. They are open to staffing the main pool longer but would need more lifeguards.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked Fire Chief Thurz about the status of the two new rescue apparatuses. Chief Thurz explained that they have been ordered. He expects them both to arrive at the same time. Without issues, he hopes for delivery by early spring 2024. The Chief noted that recruitment and retention are big issues, and their fire staff are aging. Mr. Cavanaugh asked about recruitment methods. Mr. Thurz explained that they have used social media and engaged their younger members to bring in new people. Mr. Gullotta asked what a paid force would cost the Town.

Mr. Johnson stated that a fully paid department would run in the millions, but Glastonbury has a strong tradition of a volunteer fire department, which they would like to maintain. The first step would be to pursue some type of combination so that they could retain as many volunteers as possible. Chief Thurz added that, without volunteers, personnel would run about \$8 million. Mr. Cavanaugh asked about sleeping quarters. Mr. Thurz stated that some accommodations would have to be made to each of the fire stations to provide sleeping quarters. Mr. Cavanaugh asked about ways to increase the benefit for per diem volunteers. Chief Thurz stated that it is all driven by what the members are looking for, which could change.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked Police Chief Porter about the possibility of installing a DUI checkpoint. Mr. Porter explained that he tends to shy away from checkpoints because they are dangerous to officers and statistically not very successful, but this year, there was a request from the DOT to have one. Mr. Cavanaugh asked if the marine patrol will be on the river this summer. Chief Porter stated that staffing is a challenge, but they are trying to get the marine patrol out more often. Ms. Wang asked if there is still the possibility of partnering with neighboring towns. Mr. Porter stated that he has spoken with other

chiefs who have marine patrols, and they are willing to collaborate with them. Mr. Cavanaugh asked about the National Night Out. Mr. Porter explained that it will be on August 1 at the RCC.

Mr. Niland asked about current staffing levels and anticipations in retirement. Chief Porter explained that there are 58 police officers with three openings. Within the next three years, there will be four or five officer retirements. However, staffing dispatchers has been more difficult than staffing police officers. Ms. Wang asked about cannabis training. Chief Porter explained that all their officers have received initial training, and there is a drug recognition expert in the department. Ms. Wang asked about the auto theft task forces, both mini and regional. Chief Porter explained that one officer is assigned to the regional auto theft task force, part time. Mr. Osgood asked about the LPRs. Mr. Porter stated that they plan to sign a contract with the vendor within the next few weeks.

Mr. Niland asked about the increase in the HR budget. Mr. Johnson explained that the customer service staffing position has been converted from part-time to full-time. There is also an allocation for a general wage adjustment system wide. Mr. McChesney asked for more information about the library's maker space. Mr. Johnson explained that they will establish a cross-functional team from the Y&FS, Recreation, Senior Services and Library for programming at the Welles Turner library and the maker space.

Ms. Wang asked how library spaces have been utilized recently and if they have charged for event rentals. Outgoing library director Barbara Bailey explained that the maker space has been loaned out to other groups, free of charge. Mr. Osgood asked if the two additional YFS counselors are included in the proposed budget. Mr. Johnson stated yes, they are. They will address the increasing demand for clinical counseling. Ms. Wang asked about field lighting. Mr. Johnson stated that there are four lighted athletic fields. Mr. Gullotta asked how much those fields cost. Mr. Johnson will report back.

The Council agreed to move on to public comment. Discussion on the budget returned, following the completion of public comment.

Mr. Johnson reviewed Debt & Transfers, which is comprised of Debt Service, the Capital Reserve Transfer, and OPEB. The Town is in a very favorable position going forward regarding Debt Service, which is projected to decrease by \$3.89 million from FY 24-28. One of the BOF's recommendations was to revisit a combination of the Capital Reserve Transfer and the Debt Service as a way of funding the capital program. The Capital Reserve Transfer was \$6 million in FY 20 and reduced to \$5.25 million in FY 22, then increased last year to \$5.65 million. The proposed amount for FY 24 is \$5.85 million. He noted that buying power has been reduced.

Mr. Johnson summarized that the FY 23-24 Proposed Budget consists of a 2.8% increase in Town Operations, a 1.9% increase in Debt and Transfers, and a 3.2% increase in Education, totaling a combined increase of 3.0%. With the BOF adjustments of a \$200,000 reduction to the Town Operating budget and a \$460,000 reduction to the BOE budget factored in, this results in the Town Operating budget increasing instead by 2.37% and Education by 2.8%, for a total budget increase of 2.65%.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the proposed intergovernmental revenues for FY 24. ECS was proposed to decrease but has held steady at \$5.4 million over the past few years. The budget presented at the Annual Town Meeting continued the \$5.4 million, however, the budget presented by Governor Lamont increases the ECS grant by some \$276,000. The revised ECS proposed by the Governor is included with the budget presented this evening. The MRSA and Motor Vehicle grants are funded through state

sales tax. MRSA is lower on the priority list for the state, to be funded after ECS and motor vehicle grants are disbursed. \$730,000 was received in the current year for MRSA. However, it is not built into the budget because this funding is not known or consistent. The Motor Vehicle grant is about \$1.7 million in the current year. The grant on the state level is always a year behind because they do not have next year's grand list numbers. He asked the Council to be mindful of the motor vehicle grant in the outyears because there may be a cliff in FY 25. Mr. Johnson then reviewed investment income, which jumped from 0.13% last year to 4.5% this year, resulting in a \$880,000 increase. He assumed an increase rate of 3.7% for the coming year.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the General Fund - Use of Fund Balance. He explained that the new mortality tables (PUB 2010) were incorporated in 2021, so the fund increased from \$575,000 in FY 20 to \$975,000 in FY 21. In FY 24, it is proposed at \$775,000. He then noted that the Town's policy for the Unassigned Fund Balance calls for a 12% minimum. He had recommended adjusting that minimum upwards to link it to an index. S&P's is 15% and the best practices from GFOA amounts to 16.7% for Glastonbury. The BOF recommended 16%. Mr. Cavanaugh asked what the impetus was for the change. Mr. Johnson stated that, over the last few years, more attention has been placed on Fund Balance and how it should be allocated. Based on those discussions, he made that recommendation and the BOF unanimously agreed that it should be linked to an index.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that the adopted budget has listed \$1.79 million for the motor vehicle grant. When calculating the formula, their math came out to \$2.055 million. After that, the Governor's budget was released, showing that the number was \$2.398 million. He noted that the Council could choose to either increase the allocation to \$2.398 million or leave it at \$2.055 million to hedge against FY 25. Whichever they decide, he asked the Council to be mindful of creating cliffs.

If this were not a valuation year, the grand list was initially projected to increase 1.22% at a normalized rate with the final grand list increased 1.57% on a normalized basis resulting in \$2.6 million in new tax revenue with the normalized, non-revaluation mill rate as opposed to the estimated \$2.03 million. In the current year, the mill rate is 37.3 mills for real estate and personal property (RE/PP) and 31 mills for motor vehicles (MV). Combined, that is 36.68 mills. At the Annual Town Meeting, they presented the following rates for FY 24: 31 mills for the MV rate and 37.7 mills for RE/PP, for a combined rate of 37.1 mills.

Mr. Johnson showed an illustrative scenario of what the tax rate could be for a \$250,000 home that increased 15%, 20%, and 25% in assessment. The break-even point is about 18-19%, when the influence of the property revaluation will largely go away. He had presented to the BOF a single mill rate of 31.15 mills, which would have resulted in an average tax increase of 4.39% to the average taxpayer. However, the BOF recommended 31.01 mills, which would result in a lower tax increase of 3.92%. Mr. Osgood asked if that increase is mostly due to the shift in the tax burden moving from commercial to residential properties. Mr. Johnson stated yes, that is a large part of it.

Mr. Gullotta would like to know what the cost would be for an Assistant Town Manager six months into the next year. Mr. Cavanaugh agreed that some assistance might be needed for the successor Town Manager, who did not express any objection to the suggestion.

2. Public Comment.

The following written comments were made in-person, at Council Chambers:

Thomas Gorman of 424 Ash Swamp Road, explained that there has been a desire from the town over the past few years to install artificial turf fields. Over \$200,000 was raised by the local community for this project. He urged support for it.

Jesse Silverman of 131 Coldspring Crossing, moved to town because of the schools. The most efficient allocation for taxpayers is to continue to increase the perceived value of schools. Sports plays a huge impact on the college admissions process. He cited other schools and communities that are installing artificial turf fields today.

John Desmarais of 236 Country Lane, was the captain of the football team this past fall. He supports the artificial turf field and the on-campus weightlifting facilities. These projects will allow teams to practice after schools and will allow athletes to participate in sports more freely.

Avery Olschefskie of 28 Towhee Lane, is a student athlete who supports the turf field. A second turf field will be beneficial because all teams could have the opportunity to practice without waiting until late hours to get on a field. It will solve many logistical problems.

Kiernan Tierney of 23 Wagon Road, is one of the captains of the GHS field hockey team who supports the turf field. Between four teams and decreasing daylight, there is limited playing time on the existing turf field. A second field would allow students the opportunity to spend quality time with their families, and to be home at a reasonable time, thus creating a happier community.

Kris Cofiell of 45 Martins Manor, is the girls' lacrosse coach. She favors both the turf field and the on-campus weight room. The weight room would allow athletes the opportunity to utilize off-season strength training. The lack of a turf field has negatively impacted her program in many ways. A second field would open opportunities for students to practice more easily on the fields they compete on. Glastonbury is a high-ranking athletics town, which deserves quality facilities to match.

Maureen Perkins of Manchester is the varsity field hockey coach. The sport has gone from one played on grass to almost completely played on turf fields. The amount of time that they can practice on turf fields has significantly declined as programs have grown, so a second turf is needed. Field hockey is a sport that is completely dictated by the turf it is played on. Glastonbury students deserve all the tools to be as successful as they have been, which includes both the turf field and the on-campus weight room facility.

Eric Hennessy of 220 Belle Woods Avenue, is also a coach at the school. 30 students from the football team alone cannot benefit from out-of-season strength conditioning because they lack the transportation means to get to the off-campus site. Trying to squeeze in so many varsity programs onto one turf field is absurd. A better system is needed to allow for all sports to practice at the same time. Not having a proper program that is inclusive and equitable for all is not beneficial for the mental health of students. Therefore, he supports the on-campus weight room and the turf fields.

Steve Rohan of 107 Great Pond Road, was a youth coach. Youth football suffers dramatically from not having enough fields. A second turf field would remediate that. A weight room on campus would be far more appropriate for safety and equity, rather than an off-campus facility.

Nick Lacapruca of 76 Line Street, is a freshman so he cannot drive. The off-site weight room facility is

very inconvenient because of transportation issues. Weight training is important because it builds discipline and decreases stress and anxiety. He supports an on-campus facility.

Jen Finnerty of 130 Carriage Drive, supports the multi-sport turf field and the on-campus weight room facility. She is a mother of three student athletes and the president of the Glastonbury Youth Football Association. Over the years, more teams have used the one existing turf field. More fields will reduce the amount of time spent waiting to use the fields. These projects are beneficial and critical to all Glastonbury athletes.

Jeffrey Pitler of 56 Douglas Road, stated that installation of artificial turf fields will result in increased health and environmental risks. The benefits of this project do not outweigh the negatives. He is confident that young adults will appreciate the responsible choices made on their behalf.

Greg Manzotti of 222 Stanley Drive, stated that a lot of children are vying to get on the sole turf field. It is important to have student-athletes home at a decent time. An additional turf field is important for the future of this town.

Anne Bowman of 62 Morgan Drive, is a member of TALK but is speaking as a private citizen. She does not support adding more turf fields in town because of the health and environmental risks. She supports CIP funding to study whether turf fields should be added at the high school. The mayor of Boston has banned more artificial turf fields in public parks, as have the cities of Westport and Hartford. She is most concerned about the dangers of PFAS in artificial turf.

Jen Jennings of 34 Cranesbill Drive, supported the BOE when they voted to place both the turf field and the weight room facility on the CIP budget. As a realtor, she knows that most people move into town because of the schools. Education will receive about 65% of this budget. Tonight, the community is vocalizing their support for these programs. About 65% of the student population are student athletes, but the weight room facility would be used by more than just student athletes.

Kelly Handrahan of 410 Georgetown Drive, moved to town because of the schools. This proposal has opened the town's eyes to where the deficiencies are in the athletic programs, so it goes beyond just a turf field and a weight room.

John Forrest of 52 Jasmine Lane, is looking forward to the second turf field. When his daughter was a student athlete, there were many days when there was nowhere to play, and they had to wait for many long hours. Glastonbury's peer towns are well-equipped with turf fields. Children deserve field access.

Bruce Bowman of 62 Morgan Drive, does not support adding more artificial turf fields. For student athletics, Glastonbury is rated #1 in the Hartford region and #2 in the country. Climate change is becoming increasingly concerning. Artificial turf uses 40,000 pounds of PFAS which are forever chemicals that are known carcinogens. There are actions being taken on the state and federal level to phase out PFAS in certain areas.

Dennis Accomando of 880 Mott Hill Road, is the varsity baseball coach at the high school. He discussed the maintenance costs that would be saved by not having to cut grass fields. Towns that have banned artificial turf, like Hartford and Westport, already have numerous turf fields, so they do not need more. Glastonbury, however, does. He suggested that the Council look at the cost-saving measures of artificial turf.

Leila Espirito-Santo of 157 Manchester Road, is a student athlete who felt left behind because she did not have the same skills as those who had already played on a turf field. Grass fields do not provide the same benefit for athletes as turf fields do.

Mark Landers of 22 Carriage Drive, has been a coach at GHS for over 30 years. He has visited many schools and noticed many changes in the types of facilities over the past ten years. It is time to make changes. He supports the turf field and the weight training facility.

Kerry C. Warren of 173 Tall Timbers Road, asked the Council to not compare grass fields with artificial turf fields. However, even if one were to compare, grass maintenance is not good, with weeds sprouting and lighting costs. He supports the artificial turf fields and weight room facility.

The following comments were made via Zoom:

Jennifer Siskind of 101 Fairview Terrace, supports adding in new lights and bleachers and better maintenance of turfs, but she does not support adding more plastic fields to Glastonbury. She feels like her children got out just in time. The carcinogens in PFAS are very dangerous, especially to children, who absorb the toxins more easily than adults do. She asked what will be done in the future to remove all the PFAS when it has accumulated.

Theresa Velenzas of 91 Grandview Drive, agrees that there needs to be an on-campus weight room and properly engineered turf fields. However, there is a movement away from synthetic turf fields because of injuries, microplastics, and PFAS exposure. There are also better-engineered artificial turf fields out there today. Synthetic turf increases risk for heat stroke, so she urged the Council to look at installing properly engineered artificial turf fields.

The following written comments were submitted into the record:

Pauline Parrish of 262 Naubuc Avenue, took a family trip to Killington, Vermont, and discovered that the surrounding area had water contaminated with PFAS. The Town's proposed artificial turf fields will contain 40,000 pounds of PFAS containing plastics. Financially, Killington was awarded \$6 million for phase 1 of the clean-up project. They will most likely have to spend millions more. The cost of this turf could end up costing the town of Glastonbury, as well. She moved to Glastonbury for its open land and environmentally friendly outlook. She asked to protect that by forgoing on installing artificial turf fields.

Amy Hennessy of 220 Belle Woods Drive, supports both a multi-sport turf field and an on-campus weight room at the high school. Children of working parents are at an immediate disadvantage when strength training programs are not held on the school campus, as transportation is not provided by the town or the schools. Glastonbury is the only town in its athletic conference to not have on-campus weight training facilities. It is also unacceptable that the high school is limited to only one athletic turf field, which is shared between multiple sports.

William Maag of 70 Nicole Drive, opposes spending \$1.5 million per field to buy environmentally destructive, non-recyclable fake turf made from fossil fuels. Even if it were free, they should not pollute the town with something that is harmful for the health of the environment, the waterways, and their children.

Jim Bidwell of 3270 Hebron Avenue, opposes the artificial turf project in Glastonbury. It has been shown to be unsafe for kids playing on the fields, and it is not needed.

Lisa Mendum of 45 Candlewood Road, voiced opposition to artificial turf fields. Sanitation, top-up, and general maintenance costs have been left out of the cost estimates provided. There is also no disposal plan once the turf needs replacement. This is an unregulated industry which is growing exponentially because manufacturers continue to greenwash the truth. The state of Connecticut established a general fund for clean-up of PFAS pollution, necessary mitigation measures, and remediation of properties. Tax dollars would be needed to install, maintain, and clean up turf fields. This is neither fiscally responsible nor environmentally sound.

Mark and Peggy Schroeder of 151 Barrington Way, oppose an additional turf field in Glastonbury. They do not support the BOE's top capital improvement priorities relating primarily to sports and would like priority instead to go toward increasing student engagement and recovering educational time lost during the pandemic. Turf fields are less forgiving and more injury-producing than grass fields. They also pose environmental and health threats. Most Glastonbury residents oppose funding this project on the grounds of it being dangerous, environmentally damaging, and educationally unnecessary.

Michael Gustafson of 68 Candlelight Drive, supports both the proposed artificial turf field and the weight room project. Turf time in Glastonbury is severely limited due to the number of sports that require the field. A new field would ease the load. Additionally, most students support the on-campus weight room facility.

Anju Arora of 70 Nicole Drive, is concerned by the prospect of installing artificial turf fields at the high school, given the environmental risks. Artificial turf does not align with the town's Sustainable Purchasing Policy. The City of Boston has banned artificial turfs in parks. Insurance companies are triggering the pollution exclusion in their commercial general liability policies to avoid covering PFAS exposure. She does not support paying millions for a product with PFAS that the insurance industry calls a pollutant.

Zach Bergin of 47 Heritage Drive, supports the artificial turf and weight room facility projects, which would help players develop and reward the success of the program throughout the years.

Karen Fecko of 24 Vista Lane, opposes installing a new turf field in town. If the player associations representing the World Cup and the NFL are speaking out about the injuries sustained from playing on turf fields, then Glastonbury should heed their warnings and not expose children to their dangers. The risks that artificial turf poses to children's health and the environment are too serious to ignore.

Trevor Hoffman of 56 Chatham Hill Road, believes that a turf renovation and a campus weight room facility would benefit the high school athletic community and the general Glastonbury community. They would allow athletes to up their skills and work on progression in health and fitness throughout their academic and athletic careers.

Tiago Barreira of 59 Marlborough Road, believes that the turf renovation project and weight room facility will allow athletes more opportunities to become better at what they do. This will improve the quality of sports in town.

Robbie Meissner of 259 Penwood Crossing, supports both an on-campus weight room and another

home turf field. An additional turf field would help greatly with practice times as well as scheduling for outdoor teams, and an on-campus weight room would benefit all athletes at GHS.

Jacoby Crawford of 115 Lakewood Road, is a GHS athlete who wants another turf field and a good weight room on campus as it would allow for much easier accessibility.

Elizabeth Eldrige of 108 South Mill Drive, is strongly against the proposal to install a new artificial turf field in town. Not only do turf fields pose health risks to athletes, but they are also an environmental hazard. There is a senate bill in the legislature to provide municipalities with grants to test for the presence of PFAS contamination in drinking water supplies and remediate any such contamination. A review from the CDC outlines a host of health effects associated with PFAS exposure. The Town should not spend \$1.5 million to install an artificial turf field when natural grass is a safer alternative.

Tammy Pistritto of 474 Marlborough Road, believes that there is a desperate need for fields and facilities for children to use in town. She asked the Council to consider these projects as necessities for all children to have a proper foundation and fields to play on.

Grayson Haskins of 104 Butler Drive, commented that a new turf field would benefit the town in many ways. Firstly, it would enable more children of all ages to gain the needed experience to further Glastonbury sports. It would provide children with teamwork skills for later in life. Further, it would allow many more sports to be played on the turf.

Richard Eldridge of 108 South Mill Drive, laments the fact that Glastonbury is looking at the possibility of installing 40 tons of plastic on their athletic fields while other areas of society move away from these forever chemicals.

Erica Silverman of 61 Lakewood Road, fully supports the artificial turf fields.

Dan Schilke of 450 Buttonball Lane, believes that the new turf fields will give Glastonbury athletes and community members the chance to practice health and wellness in a safe space. Studies show that people who play and train on turf have fewer injuries to joints and muscles. The community deserves an investment that will benefit generation after generation.

Griffin Szalkiewicz of 580 Weir Street, supports both the turf field and weight room projects. The on-campus weight room would strongly benefit all athletes at the high school, and the new turf field would allow football and other sports to practice at the same time. As an athlete on the GHS boys' varsity soccer team, there were many times that practice was moved because football had the turf that day. Being able to practice every day on a turf field would help everyone become a better player.

William Marut of 264 Carriage Drive, listed three factors that carry more weight than student experience: health risk, increased risk of injuries, and environmental impact. All of these are posed by artificial turf fields.

Tim McGuire of 107 Pond Circle, is an athlete at GHS and believes that an additional turf field and weight room facility would be very beneficial to the growth and success of the school and youth sports within the town. With another turf field, children would be able to get home at a reasonable time and mentally and physically recover for the upcoming school day.

Alexander Karwowski of 3 Macintosh Lane, is also an athlete at GHS. As a soccer player, he has enjoyed playing on the current turf field, but it is not the correct width for a regular soccer field. Additionally, other sports are going on at the turf field, as well. With a new turf field, there would be no need to worry about other sports teams delaying the time they get on the field.

Jack Shaheen of 300 Old Farms Road, believes that an on-campus weight room and turf field will help every sports team at GHS in many ways. Practices are always canceled due to wet fields and students have no rides after school. These additions would change that.

Nick Lacapruca of 76 Line Street, believes that an on-campus weight room would allow all GHS athletes to have access to the many positive benefits of weight training. A second home turf field would benefit all the GHS athletic programs, as they are easier to maintain than grass fields, and provide more practice and playing time for all sports programs.

Drew Stranko of 87 Chamberlain Lane, hopes that the town can move forward with a new turf field. Some of his best high school memories have happened on the turf with the soccer team. Having two fields would allow all teams to be able to practice and hold games.

Christy Gordon of 15 Colton Road, is against the installation of an artificial turf field. The Town should not contribute to the creation of non-biodegradable waste, which would negatively impact our planet and the life forms on it. Turf fields are completely unnecessary.

Christine O'Hare of 125 Farmstead Lane, supports the addition of turf fields at GHS. The equity and wellbeing of the young are at risk. The BOE has acknowledged the childhood mental health crisis and prioritized their social and emotional well-being. Participation in sports gives children a sense of belonging and lowers anxiety and depression. The current turf field is overbooked, and grass fields are often in poor condition. Providing additional turf fields is a critical first step in the process of improving availability and creating equity for all ages and gender youth. Many other towns in the state have recently come to this conclusion. Finding the right balance between the environment, equity, and the economy, along with the overall wellbeing of community members must be a priority.

Patrick Kenny of 32 Needletree Lane, is a father of two daughters who play sports in Glastonbury. He supports a new on-campus weight room and new multi-sport turf fields. Allocating money for these two projects will allow future generations of Glastonbury athletes to compete at a high level and develop lifelong habits focused on health and wellness.

Sid Silverman of 131 Coldspring Crossing, is a freshman at GHS who supports new turf fields at the high school.

Sander Silverman of 114 Harvest Lane, is a junior at GHS who supports new turf fields at the high school.

Eric Peterson of 139 Marlborough Road, strongly favors improving athletic facilities, as Glastonbury is woefully behind most towns in the state on this. A new turf field would be a good start.

Ray Dolan of 78 Coldspring Crossing, supports a new turf field. Given Glastonbury's caliber of student athletes, their facilities should represent the same standards that their academics do.

Jaye Winkler of 87 Owens Lane, explained that there has been major push back concerning use of synthetic surface athletic playing fields throughout Connecticut and major sports organizations. Artificial turf fields pose an amazing cost, an increasing burden on landfills, a maintenance burden, environmental damage, injury to players, and public backlash. He does not support the proposal for an additional turf field in town.

Gail Griffith of 23 Carriage Drive, supports the BOE and their commitment to improving the health and wellness of children. She was surprised to learn that Glastonbury does not offer a modern-day facility to help meet their needs. Glastonbury must provide health and wellness resources for children in the community.

Amy Landers of 22 Carriage Drive, believes that an off-site weight room facility and continuous closing of grass fields for growing seed or excessive rainfall is disappointing. Many students are forced to obtain a gym membership to allow for continual strength training, which is a clear inequality issue. The demand for the one current turf field also significantly impacts student-athletes' schedules. The Town needs to provide healthy active outlets and the requisite resources for children's mental health. She supports the new weight room and turf fields at GHS.

Connor McManus of 60 Roser Drive, believes that building a new turf field and a weight room at Glastonbury High School supports the health and wellness of student-athletes in town, thus benefiting the youth of Glastonbury.

Paul Bourdoulous of 2455 New London Turnpike, fully supports the Town's plans to add additional turf fields because one turf field is simply deficient. Limited resources contribute to competition and disparate prioritization among children. His research has shown that there is no legitimate environmental or health risk posed by artificial turf fields.

Elizabeth Mansolillo of 225 Bell Street, is opposed to the proposed artificial turf fields at GHS. Proponents insist that artificial turf is practically maintenance-free, but that is not true. They need to be cleaned between uses and will need parts repaired on occasion. This is not a dramatic savings over the maintenance of grass. Some other countries have had success recycling turf, but she is unsure about the same successes in the US. Regarding playtime, she inquired whether installing adequate lighting over the current grass fields would accomplish the same goal of having children home for dinner. Lastly, if FIFA insists on natural grass for the 2026 World Cup, she expects that Glastonbury students could manage it, as well.

John Wentland of 348 Spring Street Extension, opposes the use of artificial turf on the sports fields at GHS. These fields compromise the health of young people with harmful forever chemicals and plastic pollution. Moreover, they are neither economically nor environmentally beneficial. Artificial turf fields have a short span of utility of only 8-10 years before needing replacement and the fields cannot be recycled. It is fiscally irresponsible to spend \$1.5 million dollars per field and high future replacement costs.

Melissa Katzman of 239 Great Swamp Road, supports the turf proposal, which is an important addition for children and sports in town.

Sarah Jensen of 110 Main Street, supports adding a turf field. The one turf field currently in use provides very limited practice/playing time.

Ryan Kelly of 1726 Manchester Road, fully supports the Town's STEAM program, arts programs, and sports programs. Adults are busy arguing over what is fair rather than giving children what they need. Glastonbury is supposedly the best high school in the state for athletes, but they do not have a weight room and have only one turf field. He finds this unacceptable.

Isabelle Barreira of 59 Marlborough Road, is a parent of three student-athletes. The addition of two more turf fields would enable them to practice more freely. Furthermore, adding a weight room would benefit their mental and physical health.

Doug Donovan of 217 Tall Timbers Road, fully supports the proposal of the multi-use sports fields. The student athletes of GHS will greatly benefit from the ability to have several teams training and competing on various fields in the after-school hours. Families will benefit, mentally and physically, from time gained post practice/competition. Student athletes will gain valuable time for recovery and for their academic responsibilities.

Brynn Barbieri of 52 Elm Tree Road, asked to support the new artificial turf at the high school, which will benefit both Glastonbury sports and high school sports. Sport teams at GHS will not have to fight for or share the turf with each other and can be home at a reasonable time.

Kelley Anne Carey of 18 Coach Road, supports the much-needed turf fields, weight rooms, and additional projects at GHS. This will vastly improve the health and wellness curriculum in town, along with the health and wellness of their children.

Barbara Budaj of 192 Long Hill Drive, supports efforts to add athletic facilities. As a parent of a former GHS athlete, she has seen both the benefits of strong sports programs and the need for additional fields and fitness equipment. The athletic climate at GHS has become exclusive and inaccessible to many athletes who want to play. There simply is not enough space to give these students valuable experiences on the field. School athletics build the character that society so desperately needs. Expanding facilities increases the capacity for more students to play.

Scott Martin of 455 Cedar Ridge Drive, is a parent of a current GHS student athlete. It is a challenge each season to "compete" for field time. Several studies have shown that turf fields are safe. Local GHS data shows a decrease in injuries on turf surfaces when compared to that of grass fields. Many local athletic programs are switching away from grass and embracing turf surfaces. The current soccer field is smaller than that of the other schools that GHS competes against, which puts Glastonbury athletes at a disadvantage on the bigger fields. He strongly supports adding additional turf fields for student athletes.

Jeanne England of 261 Stanley Drive, stated that the injury risk is low for artificial football fields.

Jason Squires of 85 Woodfield Crossing, supports allocating money for the new proposed turf fields at GHS. These fields will help provide more space for the high school sport teams to practice, as well as recreational sports in town. Glastonbury should compete with other area towns who have far better fields and less revenue.

Dennis McBride of 263 Spring Street Extension, believes that names matter. He would like the role of "Chairman" to be changed to "mayor," with no changes in powers or responsibilities. Rocky Hill has implemented this action. He believes that this change is more descriptive of the important role that the

chairman plays, it conveys a sense of importance, and it provides a target for the tomatoes, which would reduce splattering to the rest of the council or the town manager.

Erik Nilsen of 62 Southpond Road, supports a new turf field at GHS. Studies show that no harm is derived from playing on turf, which is safe and easy to maintain. The Town needs an additional turf field that is of the actual size to play state tournament games, allows for more inclusion of student athletes in town from all levels, and offers better overall team scheduling and make-up opportunities.

Kimberly Bouthiette of 173 Colton Road, asked to consider expanding the turf offerings at the GHS. Programs are growing across town and demand is high. She supports the investment.

- 3. **Special Reports.** *None*
- 4. **Old Business.** *None*
- 5. **New Business.** *None*
- 6. **Consent Calendar.** *None*
- 7. **Town Manager's Report.**

Mr. Johnson explained that Mr. Cavanna had asked a question about commercial vehicles. They have reviewed the Building Zone regulations and came up with some recommendations. He suggested forwarding the matter to the Policy and Ordinance Committee and inviting members from the TPZ to participate. The Council agreed. Mr. Johnson explained that he and Ms. Caltagirone have looked at the commercial space requirements and come up with different percentages. He will present that to the Council soon. Mr. Osgood would like to send a letter to legislators, voicing opposition to the state's intentions to tax real estate in town. Regarding the cannabis regulation, he believes that retail cannabis facilities should be treated like liquor stores. He asked Mr. Johnson to provide the regulations on liquor stores for review. Ms. LaChance called attention to Mr. Johnson's retirement celebration on March 30 at the boathouse.

- 8. **Committee Reports.**
 - a. **Chairman's Report.** *None*
 - b. **MDC.** *None*
 - c. **CRCOG.** *None*

- 9. **Communications.** *None*

10. Minutes.

- a. **Minutes of February 14, 2023 Regular Meeting.**

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

Result: Minutes were approved unanimously {9-0-0}.

11. Appointments and Resignations.

- a. Reappointment of Brian Chiffer to the Historic District Commission (Alternate, R-2025).**

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

Result: Reappointment was approved unanimously {9-0-0}.

12. Executive Session.

- a. Potential land acquisition.**
b. Draft terms and conditions for sale of Town owned land – Eastern Boulevard.
c. Personnel matter – Town Manager

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby enters into executive session to discuss a potential land acquisition, draft terms and conditions for Town owned land - Eastern Boulevard, and a personnel matter - Town Manager, at 9:50 P.M.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {9-0-0}.

Present for the Executive Session item were council members, Mr. Tom Gullotta, Chairman, Mr. Lawrence Niland, Vice Chairman, Mr. Kurt Cavanaugh, Ms. Deborah Carroll, Mr. John Cavanna, Ms. Mary LaChance, Mr. Jake McChesney, Mr. Whit Osgood, and Ms. Jennifer Wang, with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson.

The Executive Session ended at 10:05 P.M. No votes were taken following Executive Session.

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

Lilly Torosyan

Recording Clerk

Thomas Gullotta

Chairman